1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **OLD MOBILE SITE**

Other Name/Site Number: **Fort Louis de la Louisiane (1MB94)**

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Mobile River, 25.7 miles upstream from mouth of Mobile River Not for publication: _X_

City/Town: Axis Vicinity: _X_

State: Alabama County: Mobile Code: 097 Zip Code: 36505

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	X
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
1	_____	sites
_____	4	structures
_____	1	objects
1	5	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Settlement	Sub:	Military, Administrative Center
Current:	Landscape	Sub:	Forest

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS: N/A
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Site Type: The Old Mobile Site (1MB94) contains the intact archeological remains of the first permanent French colonial settlement and the earliest European town on the Gulf Coast of the United States. Occupied from 1702-1711, Old Mobile was the first French colonial capital of French Louisiana. The colonial settlement area, as identified through historical and archeological studies, contained a wooden fort, church, and administrative center. In addition, archeological investigations have identified the remains of private homes, a blacksmith shop, taverns, and barracks, within the town of Old Mobile.

Environmental Setting: The Old Mobile Site is located at Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff on the Mobile River on top of a northwest-southeast trending sand ridge or terrace along the west bank of the river. A fork of Grompau Branch divides the terrace in two along the southeast side of the site, forming an extensive area of back swamp.

The archeological remains of the site extend for about 0.5 miles along the Mobile River bank and extend back from the river for about 0.3 miles, ranging over areas from poorly drained lowland swamp to sandy terraces of up to eight meters in elevation. The maximum extent of the Old Mobile Site was identified through a four-year archeological site-testing program that disclosed the full extent of the French colonial archeological deposits. Today the site is covered with mixed hardwoods, long leaf pine, and dense secondary undergrowth.

Historical Background: In January 1702, after occupying Forts Maurepas (1699) and de la Boulaye (1700), on Biloxi Bay and the Lower Mississippi River, respectively, the French established a permanent settlement on the location now called Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff on the Mobile River. Here the town of Mobile and a new fort -- Fort Louis de la Louisiane -- would serve as the capital of French Louisiana until mid-1711, when the settlement and fort were relocated to the head of Mobile Bay, the present site of the City of Mobile, Alabama (see Figure 1). During this period, under the leadership of Governor Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville's brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the French consolidated colonial control over the north-central Gulf Coast while gaining influence among the numerous and populous Native American tribes inhabiting the vast area of the interior Southeast.

At its peak, the French colonial town of Old Mobile contained between 80 and 100 structures, most of which were simple homes for the approximately 350 inhabitants. As may be noted on the 1702 and 1705 historic maps of Old Mobile, houses were widely dispersed, set on large lots laid out on a formal street grid, and the fort was midway along the Mobile River (see Photos 1 and 2).

According to the historian Jay Higginbotham:

> Iberville and [Charles] Levasseur blocked off the town in large square blocks measuring three hundred and twenty feet by three hundred and twenty feet (or about 102,400 square feet). Each block was then subdivided into lots of various shapes and sizes, the most predominant being rectangular shaped measuring

> approximately eighty by one hundred and sixty feet. Many of the plots within the block were, however, irregularly shaped [1977:73].
>
> In general, the plots were assigned to the inhabitants according to their particular profession or station in the colony. The carpenters, for example, were grouped together in a district on the northwest side of town; the voyageurs and Canadians . . . were toward the western outskirts of the town, while the administrative personnel and officers . . . were grouped in close proximity to the fort and administrative quarters [1977:75].

In addition to serving as the colony's military headquarters, the fort also contained the residences of colonial officials, royal warehouses, and church. A public market with a well was located at the southwest corner of the Old Mobile Site.

Old Mobile served as the economic and political center of the colony in dealings with Native American tribes. From here, traders routinely traveled to the neighboring Mobilian, Apalachee, Tomeh, Chato, Tawasa, Chickasaw, and Choctaw villages (see Figure 1). Delegations from the more distant tribes attended annual conferences and gift distributions at the fort. Canadian voyageurs trading with the Mississippi Valley tribes returned here intermittently to sell Native American slaves, furs, skins, and foodstuffs and to purchase European-made trade goods.

While French colonists consolidated their position on the north-central Gulf Coast at Old Mobile between 1702 and 1711, the Native American population of the region dropped from 5,000 to 2,000 due mainly to the impact of smallpox and other diseases introduced from Europe and the Caribbean. During this same period of time, the number of French in Old Mobile rose from 100 to around 350, although the French also suffered considerable mortality from disease. Native American slavery increased in importance during the occupation of the site; by 1710 the population of Old Mobile included 90 Native American slaves and servants, many of whom were Native American women married to Frenchmen (Waselkov 1991:1-2).

Previous Archeological Investigations: Local tradition has long associated the area of Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff, on the Mobile River, with the location of the first French settlement of Mobile. Over the years tangible remains were occasionally reported by careful observers, such as the historian Peter J. Hamilton, who noted,

> . . . a well [location now unknown] under a hickory-tree still marks the spot, [of Old Mobile] and bullets, canister, crockery, large-headed spikes, and a brass ornament were picked up by the present writer near the river edge of the level bluff [Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff] as late as the summer of 1897 [Hamilton 1910:52-53].

In 1902, during the bicentennial celebrations of the founding of Mobile, city leaders erected a stone monument at Twenty-seven Mile Bluff to commemorate the site of Old Mobile. In 1970, Donald Harris surveyed and excavated near the 1902 monument, supported by grants from the Mobile Historic Development Commission. Harris spent three weeks surveying and testing in the area. He found some Indian pottery, sandstone "foundation stones," and small iron

cannonballs (Harris 1970). A series of long parallel stains visible in the subsoil of a test trench were interpreted as "the western wall of the log fort, possibly the chapel" (Tatum 1970). The features were not excavated and no artifacts definitely of French colonial origin were found (Waselkov 1991:5). The location was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 4, 1974, mainly on the basis of historical documentation provided by Jay Higginbotham in his book *Old Mobile, Fort Louis de la Louisiane, 1702-1711.*

In 1977, an engineer with Courtauld of North America Inc., James C. (Buddy) Parnell, became interested in locating the Old Mobile Site with the ultimate goal of identifying and marking the old town cemetery where prominent members of the French colony were buried. Parnell scrutinized aerial photographs of the Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff area and noted unusual features such as a possible fort image and several straight lines and right angles seemingly associated with the street plan of the settlement. When Parnell, his wife, and Pat and Puggin Lomax, undertook a ground search in February 1989 they discovered several low mounds containing early eighteenth-century French bricks, ceramics, and other artifacts. The mounds were later confirmed by archeological investigations to be the sites of French colonial structures.

At this point Parnell contacted Dr. Gregory Waselkov at the University of South Alabama and presented his findings. Realizing the significance of the site, Waselkov, and his institution established The Old Mobile Project and conducted long-term archeological investigations at the site. Permission to carry out extensive investigations was secured from the private corporations that own the site and excavations have been conducted by the university every year since 1989 (Waselkov 1991).

Waselkov's first goals were to establish the layout of the town, including any key features on the 1702 and 1705 town maps, such as the fort or cemetery, and conduct excavations at some of the house sites found earlier by Parnell. During the summer of 1989, a team of archeologists from the University of South Alabama, under the direction of Waselkov, began conducting shovel tests at 4-meter intervals to determine the maximum extent of the site based on the distribution of French colonial artifacts. Other members of the field crew conducted excavations on a house site (Structure 1), one of several noted along the western edge of the site and believed to have been occupied by French Canadians who accompanied the first colonizing expedition to the Old Mobile Site in 1702 (see Photo 3 and Figure 2). The house was a long, narrow, three-room building (consisting of a central parlor flanked by two smaller bedrooms), with a fenced garden or animal pen attached to one end. All that remained of this house were footing trenches for the wall sills, floors of clay and some brick rubble from a fireplace (Waselkov 1991).

In 1990, the University of South Alabama research team returned to the Old Mobile Site. By this time about 30% of the site was mapped and around 3,000 shovel tests had been dug to identify the maximum extent of the French colonial archeological deposits of the town. The end result of this effort would be a detailed archeological map of Old Mobile, to be used in conjunction with the 1702 and 1705 historic maps to plan future excavations at the site (Waselkov 1991).

The rest of the field work for 1990 consisted of the excavation of a blacksmith site (Structure 2) (see Figure 3). The blacksmith shop was located next to the French Canadian house (Structure 1) excavated in the previous year. Large quantities of iron scrap and slag were uncovered, along

with an abundance of charcoal and coal identifying this structure as a blacksmith shop (see Figure 4). A large cluster of French colonial artifacts found near the Mobile River bluff and believed to be the site of Fort Louis was also investigated. The fort contained the settlement's church, living quarters of the colony's foremost political and military leaders, and the royal warehouse. Excavations did not confirm this area contained Fort Louis de la Louisiane. In addition, the excavation team investigated Structures 3 and 4, two additional house sites (Waselkov 1991).

During 1991 the site survey continued with about 45% of the site being mapped and over 4,500 shovel tests conducted. By this time, the survey had tentatively identified the sites of 19 structures within the town of Old Mobile. The archeological survey had shown that the eastern portion of Old Mobile seemed to have suffered loss due to river erosion. This eroded area perhaps included part of the site of Fort Louis. In addition, the excavation team partially investigated Structure 5 another small house site (Waselkov 1991).

During 1992 and 1993, the site survey team completed its coverage of the site with over 12,500 shovel tests dug at 4-meter intervals. A minimum of 55 structural house sites have been discovered in this site survey (see Figure 5). This four-year-long field survey has allowed the archeologists to establish a site boundary for the Old Mobile Site (see Figure 6) (G. Waselkov, personal communication, May 31, 1993).

In 1994 and 1995 another post-on-sill house site, Structure 5, was excavated completely, near Structure 1. An additional post-on-sill building, Structure 14, which is located in an intermittent swamp in the center of the Old Mobile Site, has been excavated sporadically between 1994 and 2000, as conditions permit. This structure is thought to have been a wine shop or tavern, judging from the unusual variety of tableware (Waselkov 1999).

Immediately east of Structure 14 is a cluster of small post-in-ground buildings (Structures 30-32) that may have served as barracks for the fort garrison. Excavated between 1995 and 2000, each is associated with large numbers of weaponry-related artifacts. Hand-excavated trenches east of these buildings have so far revealed no additional features and no sign of Fort Louis (Waselkov, personal communication, 2000).

Excavations by Diane Silva in 1996 uncovered a small aboriginal domestic structure west of the Old Mobile site, just across the swamp that forms the western boundary of the colonial town. This site, 1MB147 (see Figure 5), was contemporary with Old Mobile, but the very different architectural features and associated artifact assemblage indicate a Native American occupation (Silva 1998).

In addition to the features noted above, archeological investigations have recovered bousillage, or fired wall clay, roof tiles, and bricks; Native American ceramics, French faience, Mexican majolica (see Figure 7), and Chinese porcelain (Shulsky 1996); white clay smoking pipes; iron nails, and gun parts; brass buttons, kettle fragments, sword parts, and shoe and clothing buckles (see Photo 4); silver buttons (see Photo 4) and Spanish and French coins; lead shot and seals from cloth bales (see Photo 5); glass trade beads and wine glasses; catlinite stone trade pipe fragments; and French gun flints (Waselkov 1991, 1999).

Site Integrity: After the Old Mobile Site was abandoned in 1711, both natural and manmade activities affected the site. An intensive four-year archeological site survey demonstrated that erosion by the Mobile River over the last two hundred and ninety years has eroded away some riverfront sites, noted on historic maps, leaving at least 75% of the town area of Old Mobile intact.

After the site was abandoned, the Rochon family in the late eighteenth century and the McGowan family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries farmed land within the settlement area. Approximately 19 acres of the settlement area was plowed to a depth of 30 cm. (see Figure 8) (Waselkov 1991:2).

Today, the Old Mobile Site is owned three by private corporations (Alabama Power Company, Acordis Celluosic Fibers, Inc., and DuPont) . There was disturbance to the eastern edge of the site by the construction of a large settling pond (see Figure 8). However, intensive testing and the excavation of French colonial structures by the University of South Alabama has shown that archeological site integrity is still outstanding over the majority of the site area. This archeological work has also revealed the maximum extent of the French colonial archeological deposits of the Old Mobile Site, which forms the boundary for the site.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_X_ B_X_ C___ D_X_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: Criteria 1, 2, and 6

NHL Theme(s): I. Peopling Places
6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization

Areas of Significance: Archeology - Historic-Aboriginal
Archeology - Historic-Non-Aboriginal
Exploration and Settlement

Period(s) of Significance: French Colonial, A.D. 1702-1711

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): Le Moyne Family (Bienville and Iberville)
Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis
Henri de Tonti
Charles Levasseur

Cultural Affiliation: French
French Canadian
French Creole
Native American (Mobilian, Apalachee, Tomeh, Chato, Tawasa, Chickasaw, and Choctaw)

Architect/Builder: Charles Levasseur

Historic Context: I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
2. Establishing Intercultural Relations
i. Trade Relationships
3. Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

In 1702, the Old Mobile Site was established by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville as the capital of French Louisiana for an area of the Gulf Coast of the United States extending from modern western Louisiana eastward to Pensacola, Florida. The Old Mobile Site is the site of the first French colonial townsite (1702-1711) in the Southeastern United States. Earlier Southeastern French colonial occupations involved trading posts, such as the Arkansas Post (Menard-Hodges Site) (1684), in Arkansas, or small forts, such as Fort Maurepas (1699-1702), in Mississippi and Fort de la Boulaye (1700-1707), in Louisiana. Later French colonial townsites, such as Mobile, Alabama (1711), Natchitoches, Louisiana (1714), Natchez, Mississippi (1716), and New Orleans, Louisiana (1718) have lost much of their archeological integrity due to modern construction. Extensive archeological investigations by the University of South Alabama have verified the location and integrity of the Old Mobile Site as the only largely intact early French colonial townsite in the Southeastern United States.

Associated with the occupation period of the Old Mobile Site (1702-1711) were several individuals prominent in the French colonial history of the Southeastern United States. These included early explorers, such as Henri de Tonti and Charles Levasseur who accompanied La Salle on the first successful trip down the entire length of the Mississippi River (1682). Tonti established a trading post at the Menard-Hodges Site (designated an NHL in 1989) as the first European establishment in the central Mississippi River Valley (1684), and later as a resident of Old Mobile played an important role in negotiating alliances with Native American tribes against the English. Levasseur was an engineer and was responsible for the first exploration of Mobile Bay, selecting the site of Old Mobile, and drawing the first maps of the town.

Another prominent individual who lived at Old Mobile was Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis. Saint-Denis had earlier lived at Fort de la Boulaye (designated an NHL in 1960), and was the commander of the fort from 1701 to 1706. He established the French colonial settlement at Natchitoches, Louisiana (1714), and commanded Native American forces against the Spanish at Pensacola (1719). Saint-Denis is best known for his explorations of the Red River Valley and the southern Great Plains.

The most significant group associated with the Old Mobile Site were the four Le Moyne brothers - Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne Bienville, Joseph Le Moyne de Sérigny, and Antoine Le Moyne de Châteaugué. Iberville was the first governor of French Louisiana and responsible for acquiring the support of Louis XIV for the colony. In addition to founding Old Mobile, Iberville commanded Fort de la Boulaye from 1700 to 1702 and Old Mobile from 1702 to 1711. He established Mobile at its present site in 1711, and later established French colonial settlements at Natchez (1716) and New Orleans (1718). He commanded French forces in a short war against the Spanish (1719), in which his brothers Sérigny and Châteaugué, played important roles in the capture of Pensacola. His brother Bienville later served as governor of Louisiana from 1734 to 1743.

The intact nature of the French colonial archeological deposits at the Old Mobile Site has allowed archeologists to supplement the existing historical records for this site concerning a

number of cultural aspects. For example, artifacts and features are illuminating trade between the French and Spanish colonies, introduction of the calumet ritual among the Southeastern Native American tribes, Native American slavery, early creole architecture, and the use of Native American ceramics by the French.

This site is considered nationally significant under the National Historic Landmark Criteria 1, 2, and 6 for being an outstanding example of French colonization in the Gulf Coast area; for its association with significant French colonial historical figures such as the Le Moyne family, Charles Levasseur, Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis, and Henri de Tonti; and, for its demonstrated and potential historic archeological significance, respectively.

French Colonization Along the Gulf Coast

Sixteenth and seventeenth century attempts to establish a European settlement on the north-central Gulf Coast of the present-day United States all ended in failure. The Spanish were the first in this effort with the voyage of Panfilo de Narvaez (1528) and the expeditions of Hernando de Soto (1539-1542) and Tristan de Luna Arellano (1559-1561). After these ventures, it was not until late in the seventeenth century before interest in the Gulf Coast was renewed, when in 1682, Robert Cavelier Le Sieur de la Salle led a group of French Canadian fur traders, that included future settlers of Old Mobile, Charles Levasseur and Henri de Tonti, on the first successful descent of the Mississippi River. Upon reaching the mouth of the Mississippi River La Salle claimed all of the Mississippi River drainage and the Gulf Coast for France and named the area Louisiana.

Upon his return to France, La Salle proposed to the King of France, Louis XIV, and his minister for North American colonial affairs, Jérôme Phélypeaux de Maurepas de Pontchartrain, the creation of a line of French settlements and trading posts stretching from French Canada west to the Great Lakes, then south along the length of the Mississippi River and along the Gulf Coast. Settlement of Louisiana, La Salle believed, would allow France to exclude the English from the fur trade of the interior of North America and place French settlements close to Spanish silver mines in northern Mexico and the routes of Spanish treasure ships in the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1684, in accordance with this grand design for Louisiana, Henri de Tonti established the Arkansas Post, the first European establishment in the Middle Mississippi area, as a French fur trading post on the Arkansas River among the Quapaws (the Menard-Hodges Mounds Site), and as a halfway point between French posts in Illinois and La Salle's proposed settlement on the mouth of the Mississippi. Unfortunately, La Salle's expedition missed its intended landfall and ended up on the Texas Gulf shore where the party established a colony on Matagorda Bay, Texas, in February 1685. The French colony faced chronic shortages of food and supplies forcing La Salle to attempt three cross country expeditions to contact Tonti. On the third effort, in 1687, La Salle was killed trying to secure assistance for the French settlers on Matagorda Bay from Henri de Tonti at the Arkansas Post. The Matagorda Bay settlement itself was destroyed by Texas coastal Native Americans in early 1689 (Celiz 1967:6-7).

Acting on rumors of La Salle's French settlement, the Spanish, beginning in 1686, dispatched five seaborne and three overland expeditions to find and remove the intruders from Spanish

territory. Finally, in April 1689, an expedition from the province of Coahuila found La Salle's destroyed fort and a few French survivors living among the tribes of coastal Texas (Celiz 1967:9).

The threat of French intrusion into the Gulf Coast area caused a flurry of interest in establishing Spanish missions and presidios, or forts, in east Texas and western Louisiana, and led to the establishment in 1698 of Fort San Carlos de Austria, on Pensacola Bay, in present-day Florida (Celiz 1967:11).

The failure of La Salle's colonial enterprise was due largely to a lack of support by the French crown. Just as the colony was established in Texas, French involvement in the conflict known variously as the War of English Succession, or the War of the League of Augsburg, or (in America) King William's War (1689-1697) diverted attention away from colonial affairs. After the Treaty of Ryswick (1697) closed hostilities between France and England, the French selected a Canadian, Pierre Le Moyne Sieur d'Iberville to revive La Salle's dream of a southeastern colonial empire (Bannon 1974:108-109).

In the same year the Spanish occupied Pensacola (1698), Iberville organized a second, and ultimately successful, French colonization effort to establish a permanent settlement on the Gulf Coast. Iberville hoped to establish a small French fort at Pensacola, but finding the Spanish already there, he continued sailing west exploring Mobile Bay and the north-central Gulf Coast area before reaching the Mississippi River. Not finding a suitable place for a temporary fort on the Mississippi, Iberville selected the back bay of Biloxi, Mississippi, for establishing Fort Maurepas (1699-1702), named for the French minister for colonial affairs, and left a Frenchmen named Sauvole in command of the fort with a small French garrison (Higginbotham 1977:23-24).

Iberville sailed back to France to secure additional men and supplies to build on the start made at Fort Maurepas. On his second voyage to the Gulf Coast in 1700, Iberville brought additional French colonists to Fort Maurepas. With the increased manpower Iberville established Fort De La Boulaye (Fort Du Mississippi) (1700-1707) (designated an NHL in 1960), on the lower Mississippi River, in present-day Louisiana, in February of 1700. The site of this fort was selected by Iberville's brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville who accompanied Iberville on his second voyage. Iberville appointed his brother to be the commander of Fort de la Boulaye before returning to France (Higginbotham 1977:24-25).

Once again Iberville sailed back to France to secure more men and supplies for the Gulf Coast, but when he returned to the Caribbean the following year on his third voyage to the Gulf Coast he could finally establish a permanent French settlement. Arriving at Cap-français on Saint-Domingue (Haiti) on November 7, 1701, Iberville still hoped to establish a settlement at Pensacola because of the excellent harbor, but as the Spanish were not inclined to quit Fort San Carlos, he selected the Mobile Bay area as the next best candidate for a French settlement. From his explorations of the previous two years he was aware of the deep water harbor at the entrance to Mobile Bay on Massacre Island (present-day Dauphin Island, Alabama), and the area "offered greater opportunities to communicate with the principal nations of the interior -- the Choctaw,

the Chickasaw and the Alabamas -- nations which Iberville must win over if he were to stem the tide of the numerically superior Carolinians and Virginians" (Higginbotham 1977:25).

Iberville dismissed Fort de la Boulaye as a permanent settlement because of the swampy condition of the site and the difficulty of moving ships up the Mississippi River. At the same time, Fort Maurepas was difficult to land supplies at, while the Mobile area offered a deep water harbor at Dauphin Island and good river access into the interior of Alabama. Iberville intended to abandon Fort Maurepas and join its colonists with those he recently brought from France. In a note to Commandant Sauvole at Fort Maurepas, he wrote

> [We will] form a settlement at the bay of Mobile. [Use] the smacks [coastal sailing sloops or cutters] to convey everything at the [Maurepas] fort to that place and wait for me there where I will go and join you [Higginbotham 1977:17].

Iberville's brother, Bienville would actually implement the move of Fort Maurepas, as he had taken over command of the Biloxi fort when Sauvole died in August of 1701. Iberville left Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis temporarily in charge of Fort de la Boulaye (Higginbotham 1977:29).

Bienville left Biloxi Bay on January 4, 1702, for Mobile Bay, and Iberville dispatched François Pillet, commander of the *Dauphine* to Massacre Island on January 3, 1702. Here their first task was to build a warehouse to store the supplies Iberville brought from France for the establishment and maintenance of the colony (Higginbotham 1977:33). Accompanying Pillet to Massacre Island were two more Le Moyne brothers, Joseph Le Moyne de Sérigny and Antoine Le Moyne de Châteaugué (Higginbotham 1977:34). From the deep water harbor at Massacre Island, ships from France could safely anchor and off-load their cargoes for transfer to bateaux or small sailboats, which linked this port with Old Mobile fifty miles to the north. Eventually about 20 French families settled on the island.

Iberville sailed from Haiti shortly after Pillet left, making landfall in January 1702 at Pensacola, rather than Mobile Bay because of personal illness and to ascertain what the Spanish were doing in Pensacola. Although the Spanish were still entrenched at Pensacola, Iberville established a very cordial relationship with the Spanish commander of Fort San Carlos de Austria. By right of discovery in the sixteenth century, the Gulf Coast belonged to the Spanish, but they acquiesced to Iberville's intentions for colonizing Mobile Bay as they realized the necessity to combine their efforts with the French to resist the recent aggressive intrusion into Spanish territory by English traders out of the Carolinas (Higginbotham 1977:31-32).

This suited Iberville's intentions and in a letter to the Governor of West Florida he noted

> . . . it appears to me, Monsieur, that in view of the smallness of your force at Pensacola, it would be to the interest of Spain to induce the Appalache to oppose the raids which are made daily by the [Native American] allies of the English in the vicinity of your district. This is a nation which is at your disposal yet you leave them at rest while the English and their allies are destroying the other tribes which are allied to us. This smooths the way for the English at the posts which they already have among over twenty tribes in this vicinity. It is most important in

> the interest of the two Crowns [French and Spanish] to prevent such activity for it is an evil to which a remedy should be applied before it gets worse [Higginbotham 1977:31-32].

English colonists in the Carolinas had designs on French and Spanish territory in the Southeast. Englishmen made trade treaties with and sold English guns, powder, and shot to Native American tribes as far west as the Mississippi River. Although the English traded in furs like the French, they also developed a large trade with Southeastern tribes for Native American slaves. The Native American slave trade provided the English with workers for the plantations being developed in the Carolina coastal lowlands. By creating tribal allies the English could encourage their Native American associates to attack and enslave tribes allied with the French and Spanish in the Southeast. The English hoped eventually to displace the French and Spanish colonists, by first subduing their Native American allies (Higginbotham 1977:54).

Meanwhile, two of the Le Moyne brothers, Bienville and Sérigny, and a French Canadian military officer and engineer, Charles Levasseur, conducted a reconnaissance of the Mobile River between January 11 and 13, 1702, to determine the best site for the settlement of Mobile. Iberville, still in Pensacola, reviewed their findings and on January 17, 1702, wrote Bienville to begin construction of Mobile at the Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff vicinity (Higginbotham 1977:42, 46).

At Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff, under Bienville's direction, the French colonists laid out and began construction of a new fort -- Fort Louis de la Louisiane -- which became the nucleus of the first European town on the Gulf Coast. The town of Mobile served as the capital of French Louisiane, an area extending from the western portion of modern Louisiana eastward to Pensacola in the Florida panhandle and northward to Canada.

Even before Iberville arrived at Mobile, his concern about the English caused him to write Bienville and request that Henri de Tonti undertake a mission to secure peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws and ally them to the French. By the time Iberville arrived at Mobile in March of 1702, Tonti had achieved the goal of negotiating a peace between these two powerful southeastern tribes. Governor Iberville arrived from Pensacola to witness the conclusion of the peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws who promised to expel English traders from their territory. He also inspected the nearly completed fort and town erected under the direction of his brother. Iberville stayed at Mobile for 25 days before he returned to France, leaving Bienville in charge of the fort and administration of the town. Although intending to return next year with more supplies and colonists Governor Iberville would never return to the colony he had worked so long and hard to establish (Higginbotham 1977:72, 80).

The main threat to the new French settlement of Mobile, and the Spanish in Florida, came from the Governor of South Carolina, James Moore. A Barbadian of Irish descent, he came to the Carolinas in 1675 and rose to become governor in September 1700. Almost immediately he began planning offensive actions that he hoped would break the Franco-Spanish hold on the Gulf Coast (Higginbotham 1977:114).

Colonial frontier warfare in the Southeast was based on disputes over territory and trade, but this conflict was also a sidelight to larger conflicts between European monarchs. Earlier, in King William's War (1689-1697), England and France fought mainly in Europe and at sea in the Caribbean, with minor conflicts in New England. In November 1700, Philip V, grandson to France's Louis XIV, assumed the Spanish crown. The English disputed the accession because they feared the Franco-Spanish coalition would lock them out of the profitable New World trade. This new war, referred to in Europe as the War of Spanish Succession, and in America as Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), saw England and France again fighting, with Spain now allied to France (Bannon 1974:109). Governor Moore and the English in Carolina used this larger war as a means to pursue territorial disputes by force of arms, and to gain control of the slave and fur trades with Native American tribes in the Southeast. The Peace of Utrecht (1713), ending Queen Anne's War, failed to resolve the disputes in the Southeast. The only result was the destruction of numerous Southeast Native American villages and the relocation and/or enslavement of thousands of Native Americans.

At the outbreak of the War of Spanish Succession, Governor Moore undertook a raid in May of 1702 that destroyed the Timuquan mission and village of San Tomás de Santa Fe in northeastern Florida. Governor Moore followed up this success with an even bolder plan.

> By September of the same year [1702] the Carolina Assembly had approved legislation to equip an expedition to attack St. Augustine; by October 29, Moore and Colonel Robert Daniel, with a force of 500 English volunteers and 450 Yamasee, Tallapoosa and Alabama warriors, were laying siege to Governor Zúñiga y Cerda and his much smaller forces huddled in the Castillo de San Marcos [Higginbotham 1977:114].

Unfortunately for Governor Moore,

> Four Spanish relief galleons sent by the governor of Cuba, Benítez de Lugo, appeared off the bar of the Castillo de San Marcos, trapping Moore's ships inside the harbor. The frustrated governor hastily burned his vessels on the nearby beaches and slowly retreated to Carolina, after setting fire to the abandoned village of St. Augustine [Higginbotham 1977:116].

Realizing St. Augustine was too well fortified, Governor Moore turned his attention to West Florida and the Native American villages and missions that formed a protective buffer around Pensacola. In early 1703 Moore returned to Spanish territory

> . . . at the head of 1,500 Yamasee and Tallapoosa Indians and 48 Carolinians. Ravaging the countryside, Moore and his unholy warriors swept through the district of Apalache [around modern-day Tallahassee], burning villages and butchering hapless natives, slaying even those who carried a flag of surrender. After a massacre at Ayubale, Moore marched through practically every village in the province, through Bacuqua and Escambe, Patale, and Aspalaga, demanding and receiving one unconditional surrender after another. When the ruthless marauders returned to Carolina the next year [1704] they had for all practical

> purposes destroyed the province of Apalache as a useful Spanish zone of defense [Higginbotham 1977: 116].

Bienville aided the Spanish by furnishing 100 guns, 1000 pounds of gunpowder, and 1000 gun flints and 200 cartridge belts to Pensacola from his stores in Mobile (Higginbotham 1977:115).

The British were not the only colonial power that contributed to the demise of the Native Americans in the Southeast. The French at Mobile found themselves promoting attacks on tribes allied to the English. Bienville was cautioned by Iberville not to incite the Native Americans by practicing slavery or conducting raids as did the English. However, when the English caused the Alabamas to attack a small party of Frenchmen, Bienville was forced to launch a punitive raid in 1704 and attack the Alabama villages. The French encouraged their allies the Chickasaws to attack the Alabamas, and it was soon noted, "the Chickasaws were bringing Alabama scalps to Fort Louis [Mobile] in exchange for guns, bullets, and powder" (Higginbotham 1977:131).

The greatest danger to Native Americans in the Southeast was the accidental introduction of yellow fever by the French. Iberville had arranged for the shipment of 27 young French girls to be sent to Mobile in 1704 to marry bachelor colonists and raise families. Unfortunately, their ship from France stopped at Havana, where the passengers became yellow fever carriers to the colony (Higginbotham 1977:172-174).

Throughout the months of August, September, and October 1704, four of the newly arrived women colonists and 40 other French colonists died of the transmitted yellow fever. Among the French dead were two frontier veterans of La Salle's 1682 epic voyage down the Mississippi, Henri de Tonti and Charles Levasseur. The fever victims were interred in the cemetery of Mobile, the archeological location of which has not yet been found (Higginbotham 1977:178-180, 196).

In the midst of the yellow fever epidemic, "the Franciscan father of Pensacola and a number of Indian leaders from the villages of San Luis de Apalachee [Talimali] (designated an NHL in 1960, and located in present-day Tallahassee, Florida) and the Chato in Apalache" visited Mobile. Rumors of an impending attack by the English caused the Chatos and Apalaches to leave their villages in the area of present-day Tallahassee, Florida, and move to the west to seek protection from the French in Mobile (Higginbotham 1977:189-192). Unfortunately, these refugees came at the height of the yellow fever epidemic and were soon infected. Even local Mobile Bay tribes succumbed to the fever. The Tomeh population dropped from 800 to 80 because of the fever (Higginbotham 1977:193). The fever continued to take French and Native American lives until the first frost in November destroyed the mosquito larvae (Higginbotham 1977:201).

By 1705, Bienville noted the wooden fort was rotting so badly the cannons could not be safely fired. In addition,

> . . . the townsfolk were beginning to grumble about the specific location of the settlement: it was too far upriver; the lands where the houses stood were poorly

> drained; after each rain several weeks were required for the standing water to drain [Higginbotham 1977:224].

Added to these problems were the delays in receiving supplies from France. The War of Spanish Succession made it virtually impossible for Governor Iberville to send supplies to Mobile from France. Fortunately, as Bienville was providing reciprocal assistance to the Spanish fort at Pensacola, he was allowed to send ships to buy supplies at the Spanish ports of Havana and Vera Cruz (Higginbotham 1977:226).

Iberville assembled a French war fleet to supply Mobile and also assault the English at Charles-Town harbor. Unfortunately, he died of yellow fever in Havana on July 8, 1706, and the promised assault on the English, led by his second-in-command Jacques Lefebvre, proved a disaster for the French (Higginbotham 1977:284; 285-286). Little in the way of supplies reached Mobile and Iberville's death was a blow to the colony.

> Despite his long absence, he [Iberville] had still been considered by the majority of officers and townsfolk as being their chief voice in Europe, who more than any other had been responsible for what concessions were wrung from the purse of the court [Higginbotham 1977:286-287].

With the most powerful member of the Le Moyne family gone, Bienville's enemies in Mobile, the curé Henri Roulleaux de La Vente and the keeper of the King's warehouse Nicolas de La Salle, complained to Pontchartrain about questionable trading practices by the Le Moyne family to the detriment of the colony. As a result of these complaints Pontchartrain appointed Nicolas Daneau de Muy Governor of Louisiana, and Jean-Baptiste-Martin Dartaguiette d'Iron as a special commissioner to look into the charges against Bienville (Higginbotham 1977:318-319).

The new governor died on the ship transporting him to Mobile and was buried at sea on January 25, 1708. Dartaguiette d'Iron did make it to Mobile, but his investigation failed to prove any of La Vente's or La Salle's accusations against the Le Moynes, and Bienville continued to remain in charge of Louisiana (Higginbotham 1977:323).

By 1708, the English had successfully isolated the Spanish fort at Pensacola by destroying the Native American tribes allied to the Spanish and carrying the inhabitants off as slaves, or causing them to move further west to the Mobile area (Higginbotham 1977:357). Bienville realized the English would soon attempt a similar offensive against Mobile. In a letter by Bienville to Pontchartrain, he noted

> The English of Carolina are doing everything possible to win over all our Indian allies. This past spring two Englishmen, envoys of their governor, arrived at the village of the Chickasaw to ask them to deliver presents to all our allies. One of these two came to the grand village of the Choctaw and was not well received although he gave them a very large present. The proposal that he made to them in his speech stunned them: it was to aid them to destroy all the small nations that were nearest to our fort -- the Tomeh, Apalache, Mobile, Tawasa, Chato, Pascagoula and Pensacola [Higginbotham 1977:357-358].

The English continued their trading ventures westward into the Mississippi River Valley attempting to disrupt French accords with the Yazoo, Tensa, Natchez, Tunica, Arkansas, and Koroa tribes (Higginbotham 1977:358).

To prepare for the coming conflict Bienville repaired the fort in 1707 but within a year the bastions could hardly support the weight of the cannons because of the advanced rot in the wood. With the threat of attack by the English, Bienville was able to get the colonists to assist in enlarging the fort by one-third to accommodate all of the residents of Mobile and the surrounding Native American allies (Higginbotham 1977:358, 360).

In the first week of May 1709 the long awaited attack by the English with 500 to 700 Alabama allies struck a Mobilian village 13 miles up the Mobile River from Mobile. The Mobilians were able to beat off the attack before a French force under Bienville and Châteaugué arrived. The Mobilians and French pursued the Alabamas who were burdened with 28 Mobilian women and children captives. The Alabamas killed the captives and while Bienville returned to look after the fort, Châteaugué and the Mobilians continued the chase. They returned to Mobile with 34 Alabama scalps and five prisoners (Higginbotham 1977:383-385). Bienville turned the Alabama prisoners over to the Mobilians who "roasted them over a slow fire" (Higginbotham 1977:385).

Poor siting of Old Mobile continued to plague the townsfolk. According to the curé La Vente, in 1709,

> . . . more than thirty inhabitants were obligated to abandon their homes and we ourselves were constrained to leave our church on which planks there were about two feet of water and people were obliged to get about almost everywhere in the town by pirogues [Higginbotham 1977: 451].

On September 9, 1710, English pirates from Jamaica captured Massacre Island and all the French colonists at the port. The pirates looted the dwellings and colony's warehouse and then burned most of the settlement. Eventually the settlers drove the English off the island but the destruction of the Massacre Island settlement was a severe blow to the colony which had not received supplies from France for three years. The pirate attack pointed out the inability of the garrison at Mobile to protect the port.

In April 1711 the spring rains came and continued into May filling all the creeks and inundating the town of Mobile, "with so much force that most of the houses in this village were submerged to the ridgepole in five or six days; this lasted almost a month" [Higginbotham 1977:453]. The precarious position of the Mobile settlement, the need to rebuild the fort for a third time, the recent pirate attack, and problems with flooding ultimately caused Bienville to relocate the town and fort to the mouth of the Mobile River, in mid-1711.

At one time it was speculated that the French colonists pulled down the timbers of their houses and floated them downriver to the new site and began to rebuild New Mobile on the present-day site of Mobile, Alabama leaving the Old Mobile Site completely abandoned within a month (Higginbotham 1977:454, 464). However, archeological evidence now contradicts this belief. All excavated structures show evidence of having been burned in place leaving archeologists to

believe the French simply burned the structures when they moved (G. Waselkov, personal communication, October 1992).

Significant Historic Figures Associated With the Old Mobile Site

Early French Voyageurs: The first French colonization attempt on the Gulf Coast (1684) under La Salle failed because the French government was unable to support the colonists during King Williams War. However, the knowledge derived from this effort, and the experience gained by the pioneer French Canadian voyageurs, or fur traders, who explored the Mississippi River would help to ensure the success of the founding of a French colony at the Old Mobile Site.

Among these early explorers were two veterans of La Salle's descent of the Mississippi in 1682, Henri de Tonti (1649?-1704) and Charles Levasseur (d. 1704). Tonti established the Arkansas Post as the first European establishment in the central Mississippi River Valley. Living for years at a time among Native American tribes with no contact with other Europeans, he was adept at negotiating with tribes for trade and peace treaties. Iberville's request, in 1702, to Bienville to let Tonti negotiate a peace between the Chickasaws and Choctaws shows the regard the Le Moynes had for his frontier experience. Tonti's successful mission to these tribes prevented the English from penetrating into the Mississippi River Valley and provided the French with strong allies.

Charles Levasseur, besides being a member of La Salle's expedition, came out to Fort Maurepas in 1699 with Iberville. In June of 1700, at the request of Commandant Sauvole of Fort Maurepas, Levasseur had undertaken the first detailed exploration of the Mobile Bay area. His familiarity with the Mobile Basin was called upon to select a site, in the company of Bienville and Sérigny, for the town of Mobile in 1702. Being a French military engineer and draftsman he drew the first maps of Mobile identifying the lots assigned to the settlers and directed the construction of Fort Louis. He was also in charge of laying out the town grid pattern for Mobile. Levasseur and Tonti died within one week of each other having contracted yellow fever from the passengers of the *Pélican* in 1704 and were buried in the cemetery of Old Mobile.

Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis had come out with Iberville on his second voyage to the Gulf Coast and stayed at Fort de la Boulaye, under the command of Bienville. When Bienville left in 1701 to take command of Fort Maurepas, he left Saint-Denis in charge. In 1706 when the fort on the Mississippi was abandoned, Saint-Denis left for Mobile and participated in several campaigns against Native American allies of the English. Later, in 1714, under the governorship of Cadillac, Saint-Denis was chosen to explore up the Red River and founded the French settlement of Natchitoches in present-day northwest Louisiana. Saint-Denis established trading concessions with the Spanish in their Province of Texas and eventually married the daughter of the Spanish governor of Coahuila. In 1719, during the brief war with the Spanish, Saint-Denis commanded the French Native American allies in taking Pensacola from the Spanish and later defending Mobile against the Spanish.

The Le Moyne Family: The Le Moyne family established itself in the seventeenth century as one of the great Quebec merchant families serving as middlemen to convey furs from the Canadian wilderness to the French homeland. The merchant Charles Le Moyne and his wife Catherine Thierry produced seven sons, all of whom played lesser or greater roles in the establishment of a

French colonial empire in the New World. The most important of these sons was Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville (1661-1706), the eldest son who was entrusted by the King of France and his minister Pontchartrain with completing the dream first proposed by La Salle -- the creation of a permanent French settlement on the Gulf Coast. Another famous son was his younger brother Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville (1681-1768) who provided the leadership to bring the dream into reality, with the help of two older brothers Joseph Le Moyne de Sérigny (1668-1734), and Antoine Le Moyne de Châteaugué (1683-1747), who several times saved Mobile from attacks by Native American tribes and Spanish and English forces.

Prior to the establishment and throughout most of the life of Old Mobile, Iberville was the acknowledged Governor of French Louisiane. Although Iberville only spent 25 days at the Mobile colony, in 1702, he was the administrative chief in France who procured settlers, supplies, and transportation for the Gulf Coast colonies. Iberville's main task was to work with Louis XIV and his minister Pontchartrain to ensure continued government support for the colony. La Salle's earlier colonization attempt floundered for the lack of such support, but Iberville's work guaranteed his brothers would be successful in the establishment of Mobile.

Bienville was appointed by Iberville to act for him at Mobile because of the leadership qualities he exhibited as commander at Fort de la Boulaye from 1700 to 1702. While he was the youngest of the Le Moyne brothers Bienville possessed the drive to establish Mobile and, through diplomacy with the Spanish and Native Americans, keep French Louisiane from being destroyed by the English. His brothers, Sérigny and Châteaugué, provided the military leadership to enforce Bienville's administration on often dissatisfied colonists and organized a core of French Canadians loyal to the Le Moyne family who protected Mobile from Native American and European attacks.

Internal disputes, rather than the success Bienville enjoyed in maintaining the colony, would prevent him from being appointed governor with the death of Iberville in 1706. For the same reasons again in early 1710, Pontchartrain did not appoint Bienville as Governor of Louisiane. Instead he appointed Antoine Laumet de la Mothe Cadillac. Cadillac had served in the Great Lakes area, commanding Fort Michilimachinac (designated an NHL in 1960), and was the founder of the French fort at Detroit. Bienville continued to serve as commandant until Cadillac arrived at the new site of Mobile, in 1712.

Cadillac did not get on well with Bienville and the French Canadians in Louisiane, but he entrusted him with important tasks during his governorship (1712-1717). Among these were the peace negotiations with the Natchez at the Grand Village of the Natchez (designated an NHL in 1964) and the founding of Fort Rosalie (1716) which formed the beginning of the present-day town of Natchez, Mississippi (Caruso 1963:168-170). Cadillac contributed to the expansion of French Louisiane by having Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis, a former settler of Old Mobile, establish Natchitoches (designated an NHL in 1984) in 1714 as a means of introducing trade with the tribes of the Great Plains and the Spanish in Mexico (Caruso 1963:166-167).

By 1717, Bienville was again in control of the colony and this time was finally appointed governor of Louisiana. In 1718 Bienville established a new settlement, New Orleans, on the Mississippi River, which superseded Mobile as the new French capital of Louisiane in 1722.

In 1719, the Franco-Spanish alliance that held the English in check in the Southeast fell apart. France challenged Spain's recent occupation of Sardinia and invasion of Sicily. Governor Bienville, learning of war between the Bourbon kings, launched a surprise attack on the Spanish at Pensacola and captured Fort San Carlos on May 14, 1719. Bienville and his brother Châteaugué commanded the land force of 800 French soldiers and Native American allies while his other brother, Sérigny, bombarded the port of Pensacola with four French warships. Bienville also ordered Philippe Blondel, a one-time resident of Old Mobile, and now commander of the French garrison at Natchitoches to attack the Spanish mission of Los Adaes in the Province of Texas (Bannon 1974:119).

The Spanish did not retake Los Adaes until 1721, when they established the presidio of Los Adaes (designated an NHL in 1986), in present-day northwest Louisiana, that permanently closed the door to French incursions on that frontier. However, the Spanish reacted more quickly to Bienville's capture of Pensacola. Within a month the Spanish returned to Pensacola with twelve warships and 800 Spanish troops. They recaptured Pensacola, and imprisoned Châteaugué in Havana for the duration (Caruso 1963:179).

In August 1719, the Spanish attacked Massacre Island as a prelude to capturing Mobile. Outnumbered, the French under Sérigny and Native American allies under Saint-Denis, fought the Spanish to a standstill forcing them to return to Pensacola (Caruso 1963:180). On September 17 the French again captured Pensacola from the Spanish. The treaty signed between the French and Spanish in 1720 returned Pensacola to the Spanish, and Châteaugué was released to return to Louisiana (Caruso 1963:181).

Due to internal disputes between the Le Moynes and their French Canadian supporters and other colonists in French Louisiana, Bienville and Châteaugué were recalled to France in 1725 to answer questions of malfeasance. However, Bienville again returned in 1734 to serve a second term as governor of Louisiana until 1743 (Caruso 1963:187, 246).

Archeological Research of the French Gulf Frontier

The Old Mobile Site has provided and may continue to provide a significant opportunity to study French colonial frontier life of the early 1700s along the Gulf Coast. One of the special characteristics of the site was the ethnic diversity of its historic population. Settlers included colonists from France, French Canadians, French Creoles from Haiti, local and refugee Native American tribes, and Native American and African slaves. The Old Mobile Site contains cultural deposits with the potential to provide information on cultural interaction, acculturation, and adaptation among these various groups. Archeological data from the Old Mobile Site has begun to illuminate information on these subjects and may be compared with historic documents to confirm, enhance, or negate original historical accounts written from a single perspective or second-hand accounts about the site and its people.

For example, historic documents indicate that trade relations between the Spanish and the French colonies of the Gulf Coast were by turns friendly and tense, depending on the threat posed by the English. Several times, Bienville provided material assistance to the Spanish in Pensacola to repel English attacks and feed the Spanish garrison. For these reasons, the Spanish allowed the

French to send trading ships to Havana, Cuba and Vera Cruz, Mexico to acquire food and manufactured goods the French were unable to obtain from their homeland due to the effective English blockade of French ports during the War of Spanish Succession. Excavations show that a substantial quantity of imported ceramics recovered from the Old Mobile Site are Spanish colonial, originating in Mexico (Bense and Wilson 1999). This would indicate a validation of the historically noted dependency on trade between the two colonies of France and Spain.

Likewise, historic accounts mention the dependency of the French on the Native Americans for food and the trading activities required to obtain the food. The nature of French trade with Native Americans, however, is not elaborated in these accounts, and fails to provide any insight into the complexity of this social interaction between the French and the Gulf Coast tribes. Archeological investigations at Old Mobile would serve to identify the nature of durable goods involved in this trade.

A good example of trade material not mentioned in the historical record is demonstrated by archeological investigations at the Old Mobile Site that yielded a number of red catlinite, either in the form of pipes or fragments of worked stone with evidence of sawing, drilling, or whittling. The catlinite was brought to the Old Mobile Site by the French from stone quarries in the Minnesota-Dakota area (some of this material probably came from Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota). Ian Brown (1989) has established a connection between catlinite elbow pipes, French traders, and calumet ceremony practices which spread over much of central North America during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Calumets were employed in elaborate greeting rituals designed to avert hostilities when meeting strangers or possible enemies. Brown makes the argument, based on both archeological and ethnohistorical evidence, that French fur traders introduced this Upper Mississippi River Valley ceremony and accouterments to the Lower Mississippi River Valley and Gulf Coast tribes in the late seventeenth century as they explored southward out of the Great Lakes area. For the French colonists at Old Mobile, who found themselves outnumbered by Native Americans, the value of the calumet ceremony would have enhanced their ability to trade and treat with these tribes. Archeological evidence of the cottage industry at Old Mobile of manufacturing catlinite elbow pipes is a good example of European participation in calumet production and demonstrates that the French and Native American tribes participated in a trading relationship with important advantages to both groups.

The Old Mobile Site is providing a rare opportunity to study the nature of Native American slavery. Despite the rapid decimation of Native American tribes on the north-central Gulf Coast by diseases introduced by Europeans, census records indicate Native American slavery increased throughout the town's occupation. Despite objections from French colonial religious and political leaders, this practice continued and increased with time. The practice started first in French Canada, with Frenchmen taking Native American women as concubines and housekeepers (Dickason 1976:22; Rowland and Sanders 1929:31). By 1710, the numbers of Native American slaves and servants constituted nearly a quarter of the population of Old Mobile. The Old Mobile Site provides an ideal laboratory for the study of Native American slavery, a topic previously investigated in only a limited manner.

Potential research topics include the nature of the lives of the Native American slaves, their sense of ethnic identity as reflected in their material culture, the loss of their traditional social structure, and how they interacted, from the lower end of the status hierarchy, in the functioning of this multi-ethnic town. Within the Old Mobile Site there are a number of instances where historical records provide the age, sex, and ethnic identity of Native American slaves in specific households, which can be identified and studied archeologically.

The majority of Native Americans around Old Mobile were not slaves and the nature of the social and economic ties between the French colonists and the neighboring tribes is another area of research becoming better understood through the study of historical documents and archeological data. The French attempts to organize and exploit Native American labor through enslavement were ultimately unsuccessful and their efforts to convert these aboriginal peoples to Christianity were only slightly more fruitful. Relations with major Southeastern tribes, such as the Choctaws and Chickasaws were based primarily on what amounted to annual tribute payments in the form of presents from the French to tribal headmen and elders. Trade relations with the smaller tribes of the Mobile Bay area were more reciprocal, in the face of English trade competition from the Carolinas (Brown 1979; Dickason 1976; Foret 1969; Galloway 1989; Wade 1988; Waselkov 1992; Deagan 1985). In such a social environment, Native American cultures dynamically adapted by the selective incorporation or rejection of specific elements of European technology, all the while retaining their tribal identities.

By 1705, the Apalachees appear to be the largest represented non-local Native American group in the Mobile area. The Apalachees fled from their homeland in Spanish West Florida, in 1704, as a result of English raids brought on by Spanish and English territorial and trade disputes. Fear of the English threat also brought the French and Spanish colonies closer together, resulting in greater contact and aid between the two colonies against the common enemy.

The mass migration of the Apalachees resulted in fragmentation of the tribe as groups relocated to the north, in South Carolina; to the east in St. Augustine, Florida; and to the west in Spanish Pensacola and French Mobile (Hann 1988:284). A number of Apalachee villages resettled near Old Mobile around the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Little is known about the Mobile Apalachees after their arrival in 1704. Although their association with the French settlement must have been amicable, as when Mobile was relocated in 1711 to the present-day location of the City of Mobile, one of the Apalachee villages voluntarily relocated to the mouth of Chickasabogue Creek to aid in building the new fort. According to Hamilton (1910:158) and Higginbotham (1977:457), the French valued their association with the Apalachees who were considered the most proficient and hardworking of their Native American allies. Archeological work at Old Mobile may yield important data on culture change among the refugee Apalachees and on inter-cultural relations during their initial displacement.

Archeological data from Old Mobile is also providing insights about the basic details of French colonial frontier life for the inhabitants of Old Mobile, such as the nature of subsistence, material culture, house construction methods and forms, the extent and nature of trade, and how these varied according to ethnic, social, and economic status. Old Mobile provides an ideal situation for the study of the development of architectural styles in French colonial Louisiana. Folklorists, anthropologists, and architectural historians have already compiled a considerable amount of data

on traditional French Gulf Coast architecture (Brown 1975; 1976; Kniffen 1960; Peterson 1965; Thurman 1984; Wilson 1965; 1971; 1973; Boily and Blachette 1979; Laframboise 1975). They found the Gulf Coast French house form - the creole cottage - derived from French and African influences in northern Haiti. Edwards (1988) and Oszuscik (1983, 1988) have suggested that the basic creole cottage originally consisted of three rooms; a central square parlor adjoining a narrow principal bedroom, and an even narrower second bedroom on the opposite side of the parlor. Back-to-back fireplaces heated the parlor and the principal bedroom. This architectural pattern was observed in the excavation of Structure 1 at the Old Mobile Site which confirmed this theoretical construction.

Excavations of structures have detailed the methods used for repairing structure walls and dividing house lots with fences. The inexact and uneven construction of fences at domestic and special activity structures attests to the vernacular nature of the settlement. The layout of Structure 2, an excavated blacksmith shop, displays a series of fenced enclosures probably used for specialized activities.

The processes by which French colonists attempted to transplant their European cultural system to the northern Gulf Coast of North America can be understood through careful study of the French documents of the period and the archeological data available at Old Mobile. Focusing on the colonization process may reveal much about the selective continuity of European cultural traditions in a new environment (Lewis 1984). An appreciation of dynamic adaptation through innovation and borrowing requires a broad consideration of intercultural relationships in a frontier zone (Waselkov and Paul 1981).

Particularly important are the "functional revaluations" that occur among both indigenous and intrusive groups when confronted by novel cultural approaches to the world (Sahlins 1985:ix; Wells 1989; Wolf 1982:17). A good example of this at the Old Mobile Site is the very substantial use of aboriginal ceramics by the French. This is a response to the lower availability and higher cost of French and Mexican wares to the colony. Even more striking, is the Native American potters' efforts to accommodate the French colonists by making copies of traditional European pottery forms. These ceramics are known as Colono-ware because of the incorporation of obvious European ceramic attributes. Excavated examples of Colono-ware include Native American brimmed plates, small cups with ring bases, and pitchers and jug forms with handles. The use of filming on the interior and/or exterior of vessels is common; it is an attempt to imitate the appearance of European glazed ceramics.

The Old Mobile Site may, in some ways, be considered a French colonial counterpart to the English settlement at Jamestown, in Virginia. At these sites colonists from two different European societies first adapted to the new environment and unfamiliar Native American tribes of southeastern North America. Just as the English in their early years in Virginia drew on lessons learned in the subjugation and colonization of Ireland and the failure of the Raleigh colony, in North Carolina; the French in Louisiana applied methods devised in Canada and Haiti in the seventeenth century to establish Mobile. Historical and archeological research at Old Mobile may reveal how the French-Native American colonial frontier society developed and evolved during this initial period of colonization, just as the two disciplines have contributed to our understanding of English colonial society in the Chesapeake (Carr et al. 1988).

Another similarity between Old Mobile and Jamestown is that both were poorly sited. Jamestown suffered from contaminated drinking water; Old Mobile was subject to repeated flooding. Jamestown survived for 92 years; Old Mobile was abandoned after not quite ten years. Consequently, the short occupation at Old Mobile makes it an invaluable archeological resource as it comprises the remains of a short but intensive occupation from the formative period of French colonization of the Gulf Coast and is essentially undisturbed by later occupation. The integrity of the site, its short occupation, and associated historical maps and documents provide an ideal research situation for understanding cultural processes.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ [redacted]n of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #_____
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
_X_ University**)**
_X_ Other(Specify Repository): Documents and artifacts related to the archeological investigations from 1989 to the present are curated at the University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 70 Acres

UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting
A	16	405110	3426340
B	16	405480	3426080
C	16	405600	3425820
D	16	405165	3425640
E	16	404920	3426300
F	16	404920	3426360

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Boundary for the Old Mobile Site is a six-sided figure whose vertices are: A 16 405110 3426340, B 16 405480 3426080, C 16 405600 3425820, D 16 405165 3425640, E 16 404920 3426300, and F 16 404920 3426360.

Boundary Justification:

Between 1989 and 1999, the University of South Alabama Department of Sociology and Anthropology, under the direction of Dr. Gregory Waselkov, undertook an extensive and intensive archeological survey involving shovel testing, unit excavation, and site investigation to define the boundary of the Old Mobile Site (see USGS Map). The boundaries as described above represent the maximum known extent of the French colonial occupation of the Twenty-seven Mile Bluff area along the Mobile River. Within this boundary are all known extant French colonial archeological remains of the Old Mobile Site.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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